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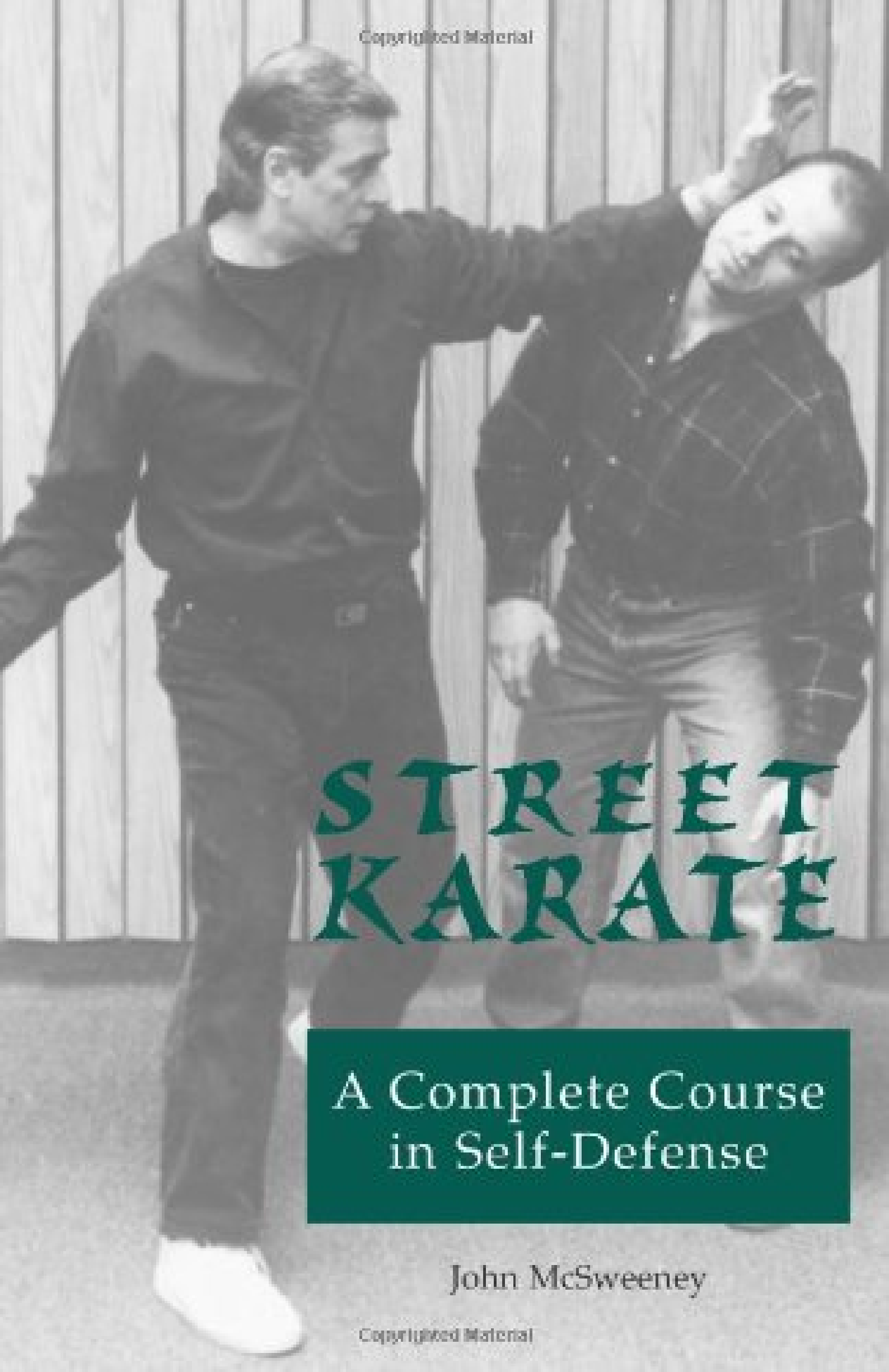

STREET KARATE

A Complete Course in Self-Defense

John McSweeney

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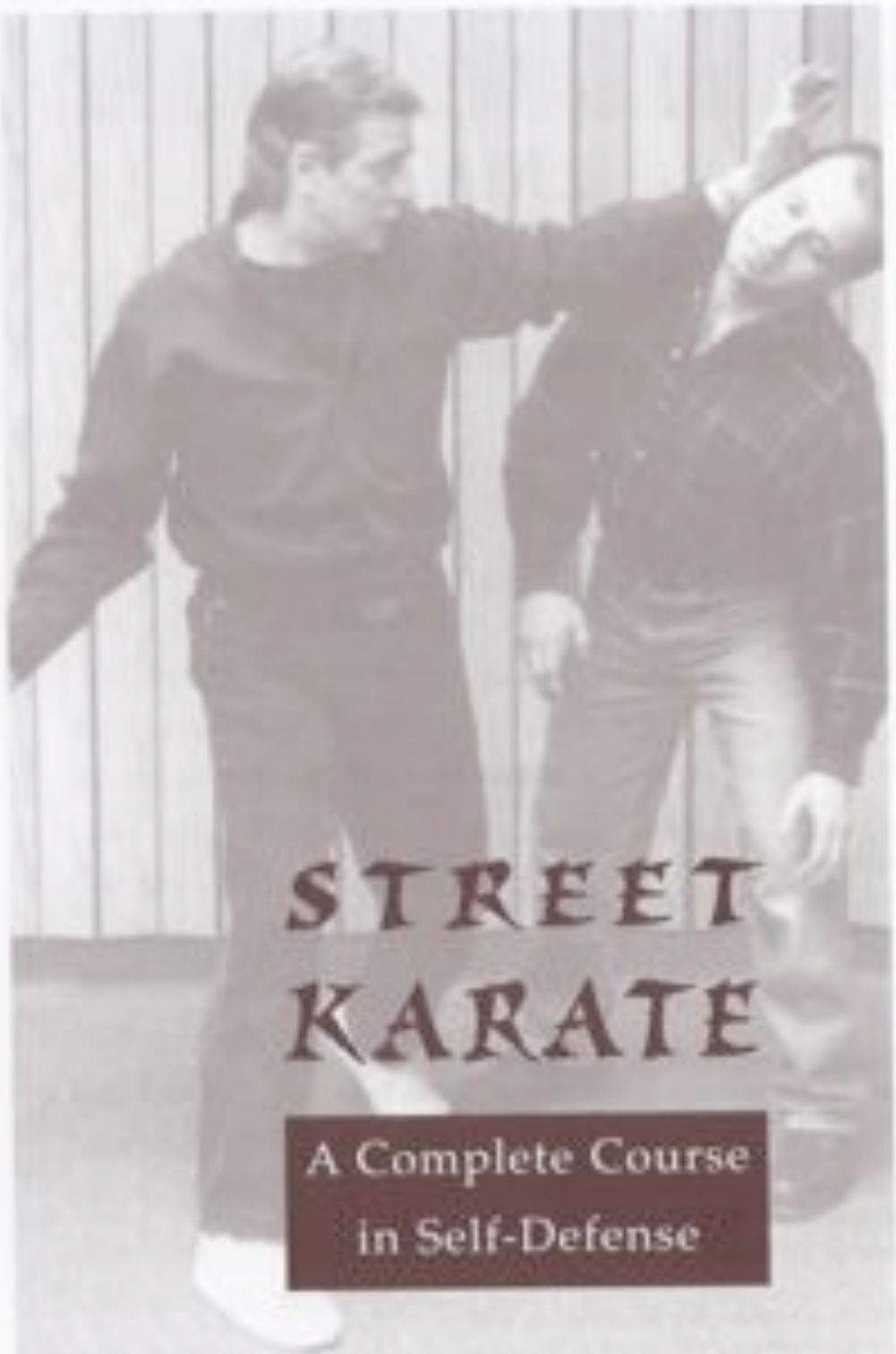

STREET KARATE

A Complete Course in Self-Defense

John McSweeney

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Street Karate: A Complete Course in Self Defense
by John McSweeney

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Tom Saviano
Mike Vassolo

Finally, a special thanks goes to my photographer, Eric Becker.

This book is dedicated to my wife, Marianne, a karate student herself, and to all those whom I have trained or been associated with in the martial arts.

FOREWORD

The title of master is often conferred on those of dubious distinction. For proof, flip through the yellow pages, and you'll probably find several martial artists who describe themselves as such. John McSweeney, however, is the genuine article. For more than 15 years, I was John's student and head instructor in his school, and I can attest to the fact that he's a true master of the martial arts. But you don't have to take my word for it. *Street Karate* provides a showcase for his mastery.

Although John himself has never claimed to be a master, his credentials certainly support the title. His family tree reads like a who's who of the martial arts. He holds one of only four 7th-degree black belts awarded by Ed Parker and has studied with such luminaries as Jimmy Woo and Jimmy Lee. But taken by itself, mere provenance pays faint tribute to the man. His list of accomplishments are even more impressive than his pedigree.

For example, John was the first person to introduce American kenpo to the rest of the world, and many loyal followers embraced his teachings. In fact, the school that he established in Dublin, Ireland, continues to thrive more than 30 years after its founding. In 1991, he was named Self-Defense Instructor of the Year by the World Martial Arts Hall of Fame, and in 1996 Master Al Tracy named John the first "Living Legend of Kenpo" when John was inducted into the Kenpo Hall of Fame. You'll begin to understand why John earned these accolades after you've finished studying the classic techniques he teaches in this book.

As you read this book, you'll discover that the genius behind John's method is that his fighting techniques work under even the most stressful of circumstances. As this book amply demonstrates, his concept of self-defense is simple, direct, and powerful—like a .44 magnum. You won't find anything fancy between these covers, but you will find dozens of street-proven techniques, and if you diligently practice them, they just might save your life someday. And, ultimately, that's all you can ask of any school of self-defense.

To get the most out of this book, I suggest that you study each scenario in a very practical way. Ask yourself whether you can think of anything more powerfully effective than what John prescribes in the given situation. I've consistently done that myself, and I've found that his power strikes are unbeatable weapons that can defeat even the most aggressive attacker. Today, my Grey Wolf kenpo school does its best to follow in John's formidable footsteps, because his power strike system can quickly make students combat ready, both physically and mentally.

Through the years, I've learned that although John is undeniably a master of the martial arts, he is also something even more important: *a warrior*. After studying this book, I think you'll agree that the title fits.

Mike Vassolo, 6th-degree black belt

Introduction

This book is a complete course in self-defense. The case stud and the photographs and their accompanying text give you all need to know to defend yourself effectively.

Everything in this book is real: the scenes, the potential victi and how they fought off aggressors. This is street self-defense a best, live as it actually happened. All of the techniques, based karate strikes, were used by the author or one of his students street confrontations.

In most cases, only a few strikes were used to stop the aggres This indicates a high level of expertise because proper response to attack must be rapid and powerful; of equal importance, however that the response should be measured. Overkill is never justified true self-defense.

Because the techniques are simple, they can be learned quic and practiced alone or with a partner. The more you practice, better your motor nerves will be trained, until they eventually re the point of "spontaneous reaction."

My exercise system, Tiger Moves, is included as an appendix the end of the book, because it is the basis for developing the m culature needed for strike power. By musculature I mean not o muscle fibers but also the connecting tissue of ligaments and t does; indeed, strong connecting tissue is more important than m muscle mass if your goal is to develop knockout power.

Case Study 1

TWO-HAND GRAB

The Scene: Outside a bar, late at night, a big guy is talking loudly and telling bar patrons gathered nearby how tough he is. Just then, a smaller man walks out of the bar. Deciding to demonstrate his toughness, the big guy grabs the smaller man by the collar of his coat and sneers at him, "I think I'll wipe the street with you!"

The Action: Unskilled people grab with both hands when they want to intimidate. They are so sure of their power that they unwittingly tie up their hands, nullifying their use as weapons.

The small guy steps back as he hits his attacker's radial nerve with a hammer-fist. (Taking the step back prevents a skilled attacker from head-butting or lifting a person off his feet to throw him, because it destroys the attacker's leverage. The blow to the radial nerve causes the aggressor to open his hand and release his grip.)

The person being attacked chops the vagus nerve, located on the side of the neck. (Do not chop with the side of the hand because it will "give" upon impact and thus reduce the force of the blow. Instead, chamber the hand back from the wrist and hit with the base of the palm and adjacent wrist bone.)

The chop is circular rather than linear and gets its power from the waist turn, the back, the shoulder, and the arm as it describes an arc that tries to *cut through* the target instead of stopping at it.

The body center adds to the power as it moves forward simultaneously. The chop is chambered with the palm facing in and then is turned down during its swing to increase its speed.

The Result: The aggressor falls to the ground, stunned. After a short while, he gets to his feet and stumbles away. His central nervous system has been shocked temporarily. Had the chop been to his windpipe (Adam's apple), it might have crushed it with lethal results.

Note: Always exhale when you strike; always inhale when you pull someone toward you.

Case Study 2

LIFTED OFF FEET

The Scene: During a high school dance, two students meet in the hallway outside the gym. One tells the other to stop asking a certain girl to dance, as she's his "property." When the second student replies that "no one tells me who I can or cannot dance with," the aggressor grabs him with both hands and lifts him off his feet.

The Action: A person will grab and lift a smaller person off his feet in order to throw him or smash him against a wall. In this case, the aggressor moved so rapidly that his victim had no chance to step back, as the victim did in Case Study 1.

The person being attacked strikes with the base of the palm, moving his hand in a circular motion, parallel to his own body, and hitting the side of the aggressor's head in the temple or jaw hinge. He then strikes with the other hand and continues hitting, right and left, as necessary. Even though there is very little leverage when a defendet has both feet off the ground, the circular power of the arm and shoulder is tremendous.

An alternate strike would be a single- or double-ear box, hitting one or both ears with a flat palm.

The Result: The aggressor lets go and falls to the ground, in a daze.

Case Study 3

RIGHT ROUNDHOUSE

The Scene: In a bikers' bar, the conversation gets hot and heavy as two patrons lean against the bar and argue over the merits of a football quarterback. One of them seems to be getting the better of the other, who is a sure loser. Exasperated over losing the argument, the latter (shown in the photos on the right in the plaid shirt) decides to throw a right roundhouse at the other's head.

The Action: Most so-called street fighters or bar fighters are unskilled in linear punching. They rely on wide, circular strikes (such as the roundhouse) to get power in their punches. They also depend heavily on the factor of surprise; indeed, the sucker punch is their stock-in-trade.

The defender steps forward with his left foot as he uses a circular left outward block to stop the roundhouse before it connects. This block has great power because of the speed of the circle.

Then he hits the aggressor's head with a right leopard-palm blow. The striking surface is the base of the palm, and the power comes from the back, shoulder, and arm as it describes a wide arc. Targets are the top of the skull, the forehead, or the temple.

Since the blow goes up, over, and then down, it seemingly comes from out of nowhere and is very difficult to block. Most people don't expect the top of the skull to be a target, so they never learn to protect it. This blow is so powerful that it can actually crack a person's skull.

The Result: The aggressor is knocked out and falls to the floor.

Case Study 4

BOXER'S PUNCH (A)

The Scene: Karate schools attract the curious as well as those intent on studying. Occasionally, people come in looking for trouble. They want to prove they are tougher than the instructor. One afternoon, such a troublemaker enters a karate school and begins insulting the instructor, trying to goad him into a fight. The instructor is doing his best to back off and calm the situation when the intruder suddenly begins throwing hard punches at him.

The Action: Someone trained in boxing will have power in linear punches, like the jab and right cross. A defender must fight him from a boxer's stance and trade punches until an opening appears.

The defender punches the aggressor's forearms because they are a closer target than his head. For added power, he steps in with the left foot as he punches with the left jab. (This is Jack Dempsey's famous "step-jab.")

The defender continues punching the forearms or head with left jabs and right crosses and then kicks his attacker's hip joint with the right foot and punches his head with a right side fist as his (the defender's) right foot hits the ground.

Kicked in the hip, the attacker buckles forward from the waist, thus exposing his head. The defender chambers his right shoulder back before throwing the right cross to increase its power. Although this is "telegraphing" his intentions, it is imperceptible once previous blows have made contact.

The Result: The aggressor collapses on the floor, the fight taken out of him.

Note: When someone looks for trouble it is generally because of ego—he believes he has to prove something to himself by demonstrating superiority over another. This is diametrically opposed to the mind-set of a warrior, who never feels he has to prove anything. He just is. He fights only when he must, and whether he wins or loses is immaterial, as long as he does his best.

Case Study 5

BOXER'S PUNCH (B)

The Scene: Many people have a personality change when they get into their cars; if something upsets them, they get extremely agitated. In this case, two drivers are vying for the same parking space. The two get out of their cars and begin to argue. One driver won't listen to the other's argument and decides to punch him out.

The Action: As the aggressor closes rapidly, throwing left and right punches, the defender falls back into a boxing stance and counter-

punches his attacker's forearms and head with left jabs and right crosses. Then the defender ducks low, as he punches his attacker's bladder with a left side fist. The bully is surprised by this sequence: no one expects to be punched this low, especially after being punched high.

The Result: The aggressor crumbles and throws up after being hit hard in the bladder, which has very little muscle cover to protect it.

Note: Hitting below the belt is outlawed in boxing, not to protect the testicles, as most people believe, but rather to prevent the bladder from being ruptured.

Case Study 6

THREATENED WITH FIST (A)

The Scene: Inside a prison, an inmate with a history of violent behavior gets angry with a guard when he is told to turn his mattress over. Instead of obeying the order, the inmate walks over to the guard and says, "I'm going to clean your clock!"

The Action: The 6-foot 6-inch, 275-pound convict looms over the 5-foot 10-inch, 190-pound prison guard. When the convict lifts his right fist to his shoulder, the guard doesn't wait to be punched.

Instead, he punches the aggressor's right eye socket with a left side fist and then punches his ribs with a right cross.

The Result: The aggressor's eye socket is broken in two. He also suffers two cracked ribs and a punctured lung. He collapses to the floor and then spends several months in the prison hospital recuperating.

Note: This convict had a history of assaulting fellow prisoners, as well as guards. This time the guard took no chances. He didn't wait to be hit; instead, he struck first. Even so, this was justifiable self-defense. Prisons are full of violent people. In this case, a violent aggressor picked on the wrong guard, a guard who could hit like dynamite!

Case Study 7

THREATENED WITH FIST (B)

The Scene: Health clubs attract people who like to work out and improve their physiques. The supervisory staff is often poorly paid, but they get the fringe benefit of working out at no charge. In this particular club, the assistant manager is heavy into steroids because he wants big muscles to win bodybuilding competitions. One Friday evening, he is anxious to leave and becomes very angry at one customer who is slow to show his membership card. When the customer tells the young staffer to

She then follows with an upward elbow strike to her attacker's solar plexus.

The Result: The attacker steps back, turns, and runs away. He was shocked to find that his small "victim" could defend herself. Instead of being helpless as he expected, she uses her ability and willingness to fight back to upset his equilibrium, and he retreats.

Note: It is very important for a woman to be skilled in self-defense because there is no guarantee that she'll always be immune from violence.

Case Study 9

OVERHEAD CLUB

The Scene: There are violent people who drive around looking for opportunities to attack anyone who upsets them. Our about-to-be-assaulted party is driving down a highway one Saturday night and is cut off on the highway by just such an aggressive driver. When driver number one blows his horn in warning, the hostile driver slows down, signals him to pass, and then follows him all the way home. As drive number one pulls into his driveway, the other car pulls in right behind.

When both drivers get out, the aggressor attacks driver number one with a club.

The Action: Driver number one steps forward with his left foot as he stops the descending club with a left outward circular block to the forearm. He then hits his attacker's nose with a right heel-palm strike, followed by a right knee shot to the groin.

The Result: The aggressor lies unconscious on the driveway, while the police are called.

Note: There is a popular belief that a strike to the base of the nose can cause the nose bone to penetrate the brain and that such a strike should therefore not be used. This is untrue. The nose bone is too weak to penetrate the skull. Instead, it simply breaks off.

Case Study 10

HEADLOCK

The Scene: In an amusement park at night, a group of teenagers wait in line for a roller-coaster ride. A big guy walks past them and cuts in line. When one of the male teenagers objects, the big guy responds, "Who are you talking to, punk?" and then grabs him in a headlock.

The Action: As the aggressor puts his right arm around his victim's neck and begins to pull the victim toward him, the victim spins his

body into the attacker and simultaneously hits the attacker's bladder with a right leopard palm strike and then hits his jaw with a right upward heel-palm strike, at the same time moving his own body center upward.

The Result: The attacker lets go and drops to the ground in a dazed condition. The strike to the bladder is so fast that it prevents completion of the headlock choke, and the strike to the jaw shocks his brain.

Case Study 11

ONE-HAND GRAB

The Scene: Schools have many bullies who like to throw their weight around. Generally, they pick on smaller boys. In the locker room of one typical high school, a bully grabs a smaller student by the shirt and then chambers his right fist prior to punching.

The Action: As soon as the left hand grabs his shirt, the smaller boy hits the bully with a left heel-palm to the forehead. Then he whips his hand back and strikes again, with the same weapon to

the same target. He turns from the waist as he executes the blow to get his back into it and to move his body center forward, simultaneously with the blow.

The Result: The aggressor drops to the floor, dazed. Unlike a fisted punch, which pivots on two axes, there is no "give" when a person hits with the heel palm, so all the force goes into the target. This shot to the forehead, right between the eyes, is very fast and very powerful.

Case Study 12

PULLED INTO AN ALLEY

The Scene: A mugger grabs an older man by his left coat sleeve and pulls him into an alley at night. Strong-arm robbers often lurk in alleys looking for likely victims and then pull them off the street, where they can beat them and rob them away from public view.

The Action: As he is pulled into the alley, the older man does not resist; rather, he steps in the direction of the pull and simultaneously hits the aggressor in the head with a right leopard-palm strike.

This blow gets its power from the waist-turn, the back, the shoulder, and the wide arc of the arm. The striking surface is the base of the palm, and the hand is chambered back toward the wrist. Then the defender chops the attacker's throat with the same hand.

The Result: The robber collapses to the ground and holds his windpipe as he struggles for air. The older man does not wait around to press charges.

Note: In today's legal climate, the older man could easily be arrested himself, or be subject to a lawsuit by the criminal.

Case Study 13

BROKEN BOTTLE TO FACE

The Scene: Inside a bar in the early afternoon, a pool player deliberately trips a beer deliveryman as he is making a delivery. When the deliveryman objects, the pool player breaks a bottle and thrusts it at the deliveryman's face.

The Action: The deliveryman blocks the forearm with a left inward block.

He then whips the attacker's groin with a right reverse hand

blade. Next, he uses a right front elbow smash to the bully's hipbone and steps behind him with the right foot, grabbing his attacker's throat with a hand yoke and throwing him to the ground, using his hip as a fulcrum.

These are complicated moves that require considerable training in striking as well as throwing. A simpler method would be to block the forearm, grab the wrist, and bite the thumb.

The Result: The aggressor's hipbone is cracked, and he falls on his back, hitting his head on the floor and knocking himself out. Some "tough guys" like to hang around pool halls and bars, looking for trouble. This one picks on the wrong victim.

Case Study 14

FRONT LUNGE

The Scene: Late at night on a deserted city street, a strong-arm robber accosts a passerby and asks him for a match. When the wary victim looks him in the eye and says, "I've got no matches, buddy," the robber lunges at him with both arms extended.

The Action: The passerby steps back with his left foot as he chambers his right hand to the rear. He hits the aggressor's head with a right leopard-palm strike. His target is the temple, and the strike is parallel to the ground and gets its power from the waist, the back, the shoulder, and the arm as it describes a wide arc.

The Result: One powerful strike knocks the robber out. Sometimes, that's all it takes.

Case Study 15

UPROOTING

The Scene: At their class reunion, a number of class members are sitting at the bar of an expensive restaurant after dinner. One of them exchanges words with a bar patron and is suddenly grabbed and threatened. A classmate steps in to help him.

The Action: The helpful classmate leaves his seat and rushes toward the aggressor, who quickly turns to face the rush. Without breaking stride, the classmate does a cross-over step while twisting his body and chambering both hands at this side. He then twists forward and hits the aggressor in the sternum with a double-palm strike.

The Result: The aggressor is bowled off his feet, and he falls on his back so suddenly that he just lies there in a daze.

Note: This strike comes out of tai-chi chuan, the oldest of the martial arts. It's called uprooting, and those who practice it on a continual basis (at least 20 repetitions of the strike each day) develop tremendous chi, or internal power. The slightest push from a master usually sends people flying backward.

Case Study 16

ATTACK FROM CAR

The Scene: Late a night on a country road, a car carrying two men cuts off another and forces it off the road. The two men jump out and rush toward the car they've cut off. The driver of the second car tells his wife to stay in the car as he gets out.

The Action: As the first attacker rushes to punch, the ambushed driver blocks his right forearm with a left outward-circle block and then hits the bridge of his nose with a right "circle fist." The striking

surface is the middle knuckle. The incredible speed of the small circle produces a devastating knockout blow.

Next, the defender moves forward, continuing his body's momentum and delivering a right-hand downward chop to the base of the neck of the second aggressor. This chop gets its power from the wide circle of the arm; the body-center drops on impact, adding to the force of the blow.

The Result: Both aggressors are knocked out. One's nose is completely broken off at the skull, and he is bleeding profusely.

Note: It is often wise to stay in your car and escape if possible. In this case, the victim's car is trapped; his skill and training give him the impetus to get out, in order to have room to maneuver and space to use his strikes.

Case Study 17

KNIFE ATTACK

The Scene: On a city street in midafternoon, a contractor is putting material into the back of his truck when he is tapped on the shoulder. He turns around to see two men, one armed with a knife, who demand his wallet. The contractor is about to hand it over when something inside him snaps, and instead he says, "Screw you!"

The Action: As the knife is thrust forward, the contractor blocks the forearm and steps to the side to avoid the thrust.

Then his right hand grabs the aggressor's wrist while his left hand slips down to strengthen the wrist grab and both hands twist the knife hand backward as fast as possible.

(While executing this move, both thumbs should be on the back of the knife hand, with the fingers on the inside. The twisted hand is at a 45-degree angle to the wrist.)

The Result: The aggressor lets go of the knife and is forced to the ground, his right wrist broken at the joint. The other robber runs away.

Note: This is a very simple joint-break, but it requires much practice to develop speed and accuracy. It can also be used against an armed gunman, but it is important to understand that only a very naive gunman would hold his pistol so close that it could be torn from his hands.

Case Study 18

RUSHED

The Scene: A female stripper is about to leave the lobby of a restaurant late at night when a drunken patron pursues her. When her bodyguard tells the drunk to lay off, the patron tries to rush past him.

The Action: The bodyguard steps back with his right foot to get into a well-balanced position and strikes the drunk with a half-fist to the side of his windpipe.

An alternate strike would be a finger poke to the vagus nerve at the side of the throat.

The Result: The aggressor is stopped in his tracks and has trouble catching his breath. He quickly retreats into the dining room.

Note: These two strikes, the half-fist and the finger poke, are very fast, and their targets are very weak. When someone is hit in the throat, he usually loses all his steam.

Case Study 19

ATTACKED WITH FLASHLIGHT

The Scene: Outside a roadhouse late at night, a man waits next to his car, flashlight in hand, for a particular person to leave the tavern. When his target steps outside, the two exchange heated words over the affections of a certain young lady. Suddenly, the man holding the flashlight swings it toward his rival's head.

The Action: The attacked man ducks low by bending his knees, dropping his torso between his knees, and then bending forward, as the flashlight comes at him in a reverse direction.

The defender steps in with his right foot and punches with a right cross to the aggressor's jaw and follows with a right upward elbow to the rib cage.

The Result: The aggressor falls to the ground unconscious, his jaw broken.

Note: A bludgeon is not always a billy club. It can come in a non-threatening form, such as a flashlight, and still be lethal.

Case Study 20

FRONT CHOKE

The Scene: In a neighborhood tavern late at night, two friends stand by the bar and argue over something trivial. Suddenly, one grabs the other in a two-handed choke and begins to squeeze his windpipe with his thumbs.

The Action: The person being attacked breaks the choke with an arm wedge. (It is critical to break the choke instantly, because the thumbs can push the thyroid cartilage in and collapse it, preventing the intake of air.)

Next, keeping both hands in the arm-wedge position, the defender hits the bridge of the aggressor's nose with the knuckles of the right hand. This downward small circle has tremendous power.

Then he pokes the attacker's eyes with his thumbs. (If the poke should miss the eyeballs, he would simply find them with the thumbs and push in hard.) Eye pokes can also be very effective when the victim is lying on his or her back, as in a rape situation.

The Result: The aggressor falls to the floor, his nose broken.

Note: Fights often start between friends, especially when alcohol is involved. They even occur between relatives at weddings and funerals, when old scores need to be settled.

Case Study 21

ATTACKED BY A KICKER

The Scene: On the campus of a college after a football game, fans of opposing teams start to heckle one another as they leave the stadium. One tall guy gets near a shorter man and tells him that he'll "kick his butt" if he doesn't leave the campus pronto. When the shorter man stands his ground, the aggressor begins to throw kicks at him.

The Action: The attacked party backs away from the kicks and

then rushes the kicker with both arms in blocking positions and pushes him in the chest to knock him off his feet.

The object is to crowd a kicker and jam his kicks and then push him when he is balanced on only one foot. He should be struck or kicked while he is on the ground.

The Result: The kicker gets knocked down. He gets up and moves away, the fight taken out of him. If you are up against a highly trained kicker, you may have to take your lumps while you look for an opening to kick him in the groin or to rush in with punches to his head. No one said that self-defense is always easy!

Case Study 22

TACKLED

The Scene: In the afternoon outside a fast-food restaurant, a high school football player puts down a smaller classmate who has been studying karate. The football player doesn't think much of karate and decides to tackle the smaller man to show his dominance.

The Action: The karate student steps back with the right foot to strengthen his stance and chambers his right hand at his side. Then he hits his tackler's head with his heel-palm.

The Result: The aggressor is stopped in his tracks but, unfortunately, suffers a fractured cervical vetebrae. He is lucky that he isn't crippled for life.

Note: In the ensuing lawsuit, the aggressor is found to be at fault, so the victim is not responsible for any damages. Self-defense can be tricky from a legal viewpoint, but if the victim hadn't fought back, he might have been hurt badly. When a person is tackled, his skull can hit the sidewalk, possibly resulting in a serious fracture.

Case Study 23

MUGGED FROM BEHIND

The Scene: At a suburban bus stop in the early evening, a young woman waits for a bus. Suddenly, a man steps out from behind a hedge and puts his left arm around her neck.

The Action: As the arm puts pressure on her windpipe, the young woman protects her breathing by turning her head to the left and stepping to the left. At the same time, she chambers her left hand forward and then hits the mugger's ribs with

a left rear elbow strike, followed immediately by a right rear elbow strike.

The young woman twists her body with each strike and ensures that her strikes are circular and hit in an upward direction, thereby increasing elbow penetration to the ribs.

Finally, she smashes the mugger's face with a rear head butt. The head butt gets its power from the back, as it swings backward from the waist.

The Result: The mugger lets go, staggers back, and then runs away; his nose bloody. Police are called, but the officers cannot find the mugger.

Note: In winter weather, the elbow strikes would be ineffective against a mugger wearing a heavy coat. An alternate technique would be to grab the mugger's arm with both hands, bend forward from the waist rapidly, and throw him to the ground.

Case Study 24

BEAR HUG FROM THE FRONT

The Scene: A female office worker is in the elevator of a downtown office building after business hours when a man steps into the elevator, moves toward her, and grasps her in a front bear hug.

The Action: The woman steps back with her right foot as she hits the attacker's nose with a right heel-palm. The step back destroys the attacker's leverage and prevents his breaking her spine by pushing forward with his chest and at the same time pulling in rapidly with his hands.

Next, she hits his Adam's apple with a right half-fist.

The Result: The attacker drops to the floor, gasping for air. He lies there until building security arrives and takes him into custody for the police.

Note: In this case, the victim's arms are free. If they are pinned, she would drive her thumbs into the attacker's groin as she steps back and then drive her knee into the groin and finish with an upswing to the face.

Case Study 25

REAR BEAR HUG

The Scene: In a high school gym, one student sneaks up behind another and envelops him in a bear hug. The aggressor enjoys lifting people off their feet, swinging them forward, and then dropping them to the ground—a stunt that can cause serious injury to the spinal column.

The Action: Before the aggressor's arms were able to lock around his victim's body, the latter chambers his pelvis forward and then

hops backward by pushing off both feet and smashing his butt into the attacker's bladder-groin area.

The Result: The aggressor drops to the floor and cries out from the pain. This move is so simple that it's hard to believe how terribly effective it is.

Case Study 26

TWO MEN GRAB SHOULDERS

The Scene: As a doctor leaves his office in the evening, two men grab him, intending to rob him.

The Action: The doctor chops the man on the right in the throat and then pivots on his left foot as he chops the other man in the throat. (The left chop precedes the body's turn—i.e., he strikes, and his body follows.)

The Result: Both robbers drop to the ground, struggling to breathe. Police and an ambulance are called. One robber requires a tracheotomy because his thyroid cartilage is crushed. Two fast strikes, two men dropped in little more than the blink of an eye.

Case Study 27

TWO MEN GRAB ARMS

The Scene: In a high school gym, two students with failing grades grab an honors student, intending to pull him into a locker room to rough him up.

The Action: The honor student pulls his right arm toward his body as he steps back with his right foot.

He then kicks one aggressor in the groin. Next he completes a crossover step, planting his right foot near the second aggressor and

hitting the second aggressor's right hamstring with a left upward knee strike.

Next, the honor student chambers his left foot and hits the aggressor behind his left knee joint with the flat of his foot.

The Result: Both aggressors fall to the floor, the fight taken out of them. School grounds are hot spots for aggressive, bullying behavior and wise students make self-defense skills an important priority in their lives, just as important as excelling in a scholastic sport.

Note: Do not hit with the edge of the foot because this is harmful to your ankle joint. These are complicated maneuvers, but if your arms are held you have only your feet to fight with.

Case Study 28

PUSHED ON LANDING

The Scene: On their way to a party, a young man and his wife are climbing the rear staircase of a three-story apartment building in the early evening. A big guy blocking the landing says they can't go any farther unless they show some identification. He has no authority to do this, but rather just wants to act tough and throw his weight around. When the couple objects, he pushes the young man so hard he is almost thrown off the landing.

drops his body center as the elbow hits. The circular movement of the elbow gives this strike tremendous force.

The Result: The aggressor drops to the ground unconscious. The victim drives off without pressing charges and without concern for the aggressor's condition. Why have concern for someone who just tried to kill you?

Case Study 30

HEAD-BUTTED

The Scene: On the patio of a suburban home during an evening party, one somewhat drunk guest says to the host, who is seated, "So you're a karate expert. Let's see you stop this!" and with that, he head-butts the host.

The host rolls back in his chair with the blow and says, "Take it easy; you're drunk."

When the guest takes this as a sign of weakness on the part of the host, he tries to head-butt him once again.

The Action: The karate expert punches the aggressor's bladder with a right side fist as he slips the head butt. He then rises from his chair and pushes the drunken guest to the ground.

Next, the host jumps on the downed guest and squeezes his larynx with a left eagle's claw (the eagle's claw is formed by the thumb and index finger). Finally, he places his thumb on his opponent's left eyeball and tells him that he could destroy his larynx and gouge out his eye. He asks whether he understands this and whether he realizes that he should never mess with him again. When the guest answers yes, and his face shows terror, the host lets him up. (Words can have great importance, especially when they are directly related to actions.)

The Result: The aggressor leaves the party and the following day comes back to apologize. Some people like to debunk everything, especially martial arts "experts."

Case Study 31

SITTING AT A BAR

The Scene: Sales agents are drinking and singing after dinner at an expensive restaurant with executives of the company they represent. The executives' wives are also present. One agent (big but paunchy, as well as slightly drunk) decides to needle the sales manager, who is seated at the bar. The drunk has previously been told that the sales manager is a karate expert, and, for some reason, this bothers him. He walks over to the sales manager and says, "You don't look so tough. I'm a 'Nam vet and saw plenty of action. I could deck a punk like you in a second."

When he gets no response, the agent decides to insult the sales manager's wife to see if that will provoke a response. "Furthermore, your wife can't sing worth a damn," the drunken abuser continues.

The Action: The sales manager hits the drunk in the bladder with a left hammer fist and then grabs his larynx and squeezes it with a right eagle's claw. Next he hits the drunk's upper chest with a double heel-palm strike, as he spins around on his barstool.

The Result: The aggressor goes flying backward and lands on a table on his back, in a state of shock.

Note: All this was accomplished while the karate expert was seated, so there was minimum leverage. However, striking the bladder and squeezing the drunk's larynx had the effect of bringing him up on his toes. When he was hit with the double palm strike he wasn't rooted to the ground and therefore flew backward like a shot.

This incident gives rise to an ethical question. Is it right to hit someone over an insult? In today's political climate, probably not. However, insulting a warrior is one thing; insulting his wife is another!

Case Study 32

DANCING IN A NIGHTCLUB

The Scene: On a crowded dance floor in a popular nightclub, one man punches another in the shoulder and snarls, "Don't bump into me again, jerk!"

The other says, "Take it easy, buddy. The floor is crowded—anyone could have bumped you."

Taking this response as a sign of weakness, the aggressor throws his second punch, this one aimed for his victim's face.

The Action: The second dancer ducks under the blow and steps in with his right foot as he hit his attacker's lower ribs with a right upward elbow.

He then grabs his attacker's larynx with a right eagle's claw and squeezes it. As he squeezes, he whispers a threat into the now-submissive bully's ear. "I'll put your lights out if you mess with me again!"

The Result: The aggresser coughs to catch his breath and then disappears from the dance floor. The two strikes, coupled with the threat, take the steam out of the would-be tough guy and cause him to retreat. The proper use of words is an important aspect of self-defense but, without strikes, lacks impact.

Case Study 33

MEN'S ROOM

The Scene: As a man enters the men's room of a hotel, he is confronted by a knife-wielding robber, who demands, "Keep your mouth shut and give me your wallet!"

The Action: The man being threatened kicks the robber in the groin with his right foot and, as the robber leans forward from the blow, hits his face with an upswing.

head butt, as she steps forward with her left foot. Her striking surface is the top of her forehead, and she strikes with her head bent down. This blow gets its power from the back, which moves slightly backward and then forward from the waist. The sternum, rather than the face, is the target because of the disparity in their height.

Next, the woman drives her right knee into the would-be rapist's groin and continues to hit him with knee strikes as long as necessary.

The Result: The man drops to the floor in agony, clutching his groin. The police are called.

Note: The knee is the body's most powerful weapon and is very effective for "in-fighting." This woman had been trained to use it effectively.

Case Study 35

BELLY DANCER

The Scene: Late one night in a crowded nightclub three belly dancers come down from the stage and perform for the crowd on the main floor. One of the performers dances next to the bar, and as she passes by a man seated at the bar, he grabs her costume and tears it. She warns him to stop and then continues dancing up and down the length of the bar. When she passes near him again, he grabs her costume again.

The Action: Without batting an eyelash, the belly dancer spins around and hits the aggressor in his chest with a rear elbow strike. She continues to dance as if nothing happened and moves back toward the center of the floor.

The Result: The man slumps forward on his barstool, coughing to catch his breath. A bouncer comes over and warns him not to touch the dancer again.

Note: Some men enjoy taking advantage of women. Verbal warnings often go unheeded, but an elbow strike to the chest sends a loud message. This belly dancer had taken the trouble to become skilled in self-defense and could follow up her warning with action.

CONCLUSION

Self-defense is not like a competitive boxing match of many rounds, nor is it usually a knock-down, drag-out fight to the finish.

In most cases, one or two powerful strikes to key targets are all that it takes to deter an aggressor. That is why it is worthwhile for even a small woman to become proficient in karate strikes. If a woman learns to hit hard, her violent response will so surprise an attacker that he may think twice about continuing his attack.

Judo and wrestling methods of self-defense tie you up with the aggressor and can result in long, drawn-out affairs. Karate strikes, on the other hand, are quick. They also give you room to maneuver or an opportunity to escape, an honorable option for anyone. However, you must learn to hit hard if you want your strikes to be effective, and this requires life-long training.

Do the Tiger Moves every day and practice your strikes two or three times per week. There are many powerful strikes in this book, as well as key targets to hit. Pick out 15 to 20 strikes that appeal to you and hit pads or a heavy bag, or simply hit through the air for at least 15 minutes each practice session.

You must work to develop speed in your strikes. Impact = Mass x Speed Squared. Since speed is squared, any increase in it will have a dramatic effect on impact.

As these case studies illustrate, attacks occur everywhere and often when you least expect them. Awareness, therefore, is the most important aspect of self-defense. Don't jog at night. Don't listen to music on a headset when you jog. Don't walk in dark alleys. The list

of don'ts is endless, but if you want to be fully aware, you should strive to become as cautious as a warrior. A warrior is cautious at all times and in all circumstances; he always expects trouble and is, therefore, seldom surprised when trouble comes his way.

There is only one tactic to remember, and it is very simple: *Hit the closest target with the closest weapon.*

If you take the trouble to become proficient in self-defense it will make you a stronger, more confident person in every aspect of your life, and you will never allow anyone to dominate you.

Good luck, and as my Irish ancestors used to say, back in the days of the shillelagh faction fighters: "More power to your elbow!"

"There are paths that should not be taken.
There are forces that should not be confronted.
There are fortified areas that should not be attacked.
There are situations that should not be contested."

The Art of War
Sun Tzu, 600 B.C.

Appendix

TIGER MOVES EXERCISE SYSTEM

Tiger Moves is an exercise system I developed to build and maintain a powerful body. The system consists of stretching with great tension, which is what tigers and other animals, including house cats, do to build and maintain their musculature.

The individual Tiger Moves are derived from kung fu tension exercises. I altered the ancient moves, which had a limited range of movement, to allow complete expansion and contraction of opposing muscle structures.

I eventually standardized seven moves, which are fully described below. They should be performed daily, in three sets of 10 repetitions. Vary the tension until it feels comfortable. A sufficient amount of tension will develop the muscle fibers and the connecting tissue just as much as weight lifting does, although the process takes longer. Weight lifting uses *external* resistance, whereas Tiger Moves use *internal* resistance to build muscles.

Three additional benefits of Tiger Moves are that (1) they energize the body, (2) they fight the aging process by increasing blood flow through even the smallest capillaries, and (3) because they do not require a gym or equipment, they can be performed anywhere and at any time.

THE SEVEN TIGER MOVES

1. Barrel Squeeze. Place your left foot forward, bend your left knee, and keep your back straight. Hold your hands in front, palms

The author performing the barrel squeeze.

facing. Bring your hands back slowly, using great tension, until your back muscles are fully flexed. Hold this position for a count of one and then move your hands forward slowly and with tension until the palms face each other. Hold this position for a count of one and then repeat the entire procedure. Be sure your arms remain parallel to the floor.

The shoulders should be held naturally and not lifted. Breathe using both your nose and mouth, breathing in on the way back and out on the way forward. Feel the pectoral (chest) muscles working.

2. Shoulder Roll. Stand with your feet apart, both knees bent, and your back straight. Start with your hands in fists, both arms across your chest. Roll your shoulders back until your back muscles are flexed.

Roll your shoulders forward until your arms cross your chest. Keep forearms parallel to the ground and keep shoulders low, not lifted. Feel the deltoid (shoulder) muscles working.

Shoulder roll.

Wrist twist.

3. Wrist Twist. Place your right foot forward, bend your right knee, and keep your back straight. Hold your arms in front, close to your body, with your fists turned in. Rotate your arms back, turning your fists gradually until they turn out. Flex your back muscles and then rotate your arms forward to the starting position, turning the fists gradually until they turn in completely. Keep your arms down and close to your body during the entire movement. Feel the triceps (upper arm) working.

4. High Reach. Stand with feet apart, both arms held straight up. Reach as high as possible with one arm at a time, the other arm moving down slightly each time. Breathe in and out on each count.

5. Pull Down. Stand with feet apart. With your hands in fists, lift one arm slightly above your head and pull down close to the centerline of your body using great tension. As one arm pulls down, the other moves up. This exercise works the inner pectorals, biceps, and forearms.

6. **Stomach Roll**. Stand with your feet apart. Press your stomach down with great tension as you exhale. Then suck your stomach in as far as possible as you inhale.

7. **Knee Bend**. Knee bends strengthen leg muscles and knee joints. Bend halfway only, since deep bends injure the knee joints. Be sure to maintain great tension while bending.

Tiger Moves should be performed slowly, with great tension. Breathe using both nose and mouth, inhaling on the way back (or up) and exhaling on the way forward (or down).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John McSweeney is a 10th-degree black belt and the chairman of the American Kenpo Karate Association.

He studied judo at the Kodokan in Tokyo, Japan (1952), was one of Ed Parker's earliest black belts (1962), and founded Karate in Ireland (1963). In 1991, McSweeney was named Self-Defense Instructor of the Year and inducted into the World Martial Arts Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio. In 1996, McSweeney was inducted into Al Tracy's Kenpo Karate Hall of Fame in Lexington, Kentucky, as the first "Living Legend."

John McSweeney is the author of *Battleaxe: A Warrior's Tale*, and with Pat Cascio, *Swat Battle Tactics*. He has also been the author of numerous articles for martial arts and handgun magazines.

McSweeney spent 12 years in the U.S. armed forces, saw combat in the Korean War, and attained the rank of captain, infantry. His academic credentials include a BA degree from St. John's University in New York City and an MS degree from Trinity College, Dublin University, Ireland.

The McSweeney system of self-defense, initiated in 1972, is known for its simplicity and great hitting power.